



SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT  
JOHN ADAMS COURTHOUSE

RODERICK L. IRELAND  
CHIEF JUSTICE

November 14, 2011

Welcome to the Massachusetts bar. This bar has a long history of excellence, creativity, integrity, and commitment to *pro bono* service for those in need. I am confident that you will not only uphold that great tradition, but pass it on, renewed and reinvigorated, to a new generation of lawyers.

One of the ways in which we pass on that tradition is through mentoring younger lawyers. As one of my heroes, the late United States Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, once said:

"None of us got where we are solely by pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps. We got here because somebody – a parent, a teacher, an Ivy League crony or a few nuns – bent down and helped us pick up our boots."

As you enter the world of law, each of you will need someone more experienced in the law to guide you, not only to "pick up [your] boots," but in developing a law practice, learning how to practice law and try cases, complying with applicable ethical rules, and finding answers to the many questions not likely to be addressed in a law book. Those of you fortunate enough to have found jobs in a law firm, a corporate counsel's office, the public sector, or a legal service organization will, I hope, have mentors available to you, but you will still need to seek out their guidance. Those of you who are beginning your legal careers as sole practitioners or who are still looking for a job in the law may not be able to walk down the hall to ask a more experienced colleague for guidance and advice, but it is critically important that you recognize the need for a mentor and take the initiative to find one.

To that end, I have attached to this letter a list provided by the Access to Justice Commission of the many mentoring resources that are available to you as members of the Massachusetts bar. As you can see, some offer mentoring in specific areas of the law, while others offer more general guidance.

I urge you to take advantage of one or more of these mentoring opportunities as soon as possible. I also encourage those of you who have not yet found a job in the law to work with your mentor to help you find some way to practice law, perhaps by providing *pro bono* legal service or limited assistance representation to the many poor and working class persons with substantial legal problems but limited means.

I wish you well as you embark on your career in the law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roderick L. Ireland", is written over a horizontal line.

Roderick L. Ireland

Enclosure

ONE PEMBERTON SQUARE, SUITE 2200, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108-1735

## Mentoring Programs for Newly Admitted Lawyers in Massachusetts

### Statewide Bar Associations

#### **Massachusetts Bar Association:**

- *The Mentor Program* offers MBA members the opportunity to speak with an experienced attorney for advice. Mentors are knowledgeable practitioners, in good standing, have practiced law for more than seven years and have volunteered to advise other attorneys on selected legal topics.  
<http://www.massbar.org/for-attorneys/mentor-program>.
- *MBA Mentoring Circles* offers a unique spin on conventional mentoring by combining varying professional levels together and providing all members, senior and junior level, with the resources they need to develop and improve their management and leadership skills and grow within their profession. While offering guidance, advice and valuable insights to one another, members of our mentoring circles will provide support and encouragement in a confidential setting.  
<http://www.massbar.org/for-attorneys/mentor-circles>.
- *Massachusetts Bar Association's Law Practice Management Section* is developing a program in conjunction with the Massachusetts Law Office Assistance Program to provide limited technical assistance to both new lawyers as well as more experienced lawyers to assist in the management of effective private law practice, including such topics as technology, finance and billing, human resources, marketing, general law office administration and ethics.  
<http://www.massbar.org/member-groups/sections/law-practice-management>.

### County/Regional Bar Associations

**Bar Association of Norfolk County:** The Norfolk County Bar Association has a mentor panel that includes attorneys willing to act as mentors to new attorneys beginning their law practice but is open to other attorneys seeking further legal assistance. The new attorney can submit their request for an area of law and the bar disseminates that information throughout the membership in order to find a match.  
<http://www.norfolkbarassn.org/programs>.

**Barnstable County Bar Association:** The Barnstable County Bar Association is establishing an attorney mentor program for its lawyers this year.  
<http://www.barnstablecountybarassociation.org/>

**Boston Bar Association:** The Boston Bar Association (BBA) has an established Group Mentoring Program. Noting that an indicator of career success for lawyers is having a supportive mentoring environment, the BBA's group mentoring program aims to build networks for lawyers and support a new generation of diverse leaders in our legal community. Each of the mentoring groups is led by two experienced mentors working with eight to ten participants. Our groups are open to lawyers from all backgrounds and practice areas who have been admitted to the bar eight

years or less. The BBA also has an array of programming for newly admitted lawyers – including networking, practical skills workshops, and other training – primarily through its New Lawyers Section.

<http://www.bostonbar.org/sections/diversity-inclusion/group-mentoring-program>.

**Essex County Bar Association:** The Essex County Bar Association (ECBA) promotes mentoring by contacting established members and connecting them with new attorneys who practice in the same area. While this is done at the request of the new attorney, the ECBA allows the relationship to develop on its own. The bar holds social events and seminars in order to encourage mentor/mentee relationships.

<http://www.essexcountybar.org/>.

Many other county bars, while not yet adopting formal mentoring initiatives, provide informal networking and/or training opportunities for their members. Please refer to the following websites, where available, for further information:

- Berkshire County Bar Association; <http://www.berkshirebar.com/>.
- Bristol County Bar Association; <http://bristolcountybar.org/>.
- Dukes County Bar Association
- Franklin County Bar Association; <http://www.franklincountybar.org/>.
- Hampden County Bar Association; <http://www.hcbar.org/>.
- Hampshire County Bar Association; <http://www.hampshirebar.org/>.
- Middlesex County Bar Association; <http://www.middlesexbar.org/>.
- Nantucket County Bar Association
- Plymouth County Bar Association; <http://plymouthcountybar.com/>.
- Worcester County Bar Association; <http://www.worcestercountybar.org/>.

### **Affinity Bar Associations**

**Massachusetts LGBTQ Bar Association:** The Association's Mentorship Committee builds creative programming to meet the needs of LGBTQ law students and lawyers at all stages in their careers, and administers the Mass LGBTQ Bar's Mentoring Program. The Committee is comprised of law students, new lawyers, and experienced lawyers.

<http://www.masslgbtqbar.org/article.html?aid=105>.

**South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston:** The South Asian Bar Association – Greater Boston (SABA GB) has mentoring circles geared towards certain areas of practice (transactional, litigation, public interest) that are available to any member of SABA GB. These circles are geared towards mentoring young attorneys.

<http://www.sabagb.org/>.

**Women's Bar Association (WBA):** The WBA's mentoring circles program provides a confidential forum for women lawyers to discuss professional development and many other issues. Each circle is comprised of ten to fifteen women of varying levels of experience from a wide range of practice areas. Each circle meets at least quarterly.

[http://www.womensbar.org/content.aspx?page\\_id=22&club\\_id=808000&module\\_id=71620](http://www.womensbar.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=808000&module_id=71620)

Many other affinity bars, while not yet adopting formal mentoring initiatives, provide informal networking and/or training opportunities for their members. Please refer to the following websites for further information:

- Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts; <http://www.aalam.org/>.
- Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys; <http://www.mahaweb.org/>.
- Massachusetts Association of Women Lawyers; <http://www.mawl.org/>.
- Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association; <http://www.massblacklawyers.org/>.
- Massachusetts Black Women Attorneys; <http://www.massblackwomenattys.org/>.

### **Other Professional Associations**

**Massachusetts State Committee of the American College of Trial Lawyers:** A free pilot mentoring program by which Massachusetts Fellows of the American College of Trial Lawyers will be paired with lawyers in early stages of their careers who have a strong and demonstrated interest in concentrating their practices in trial advocacy. .  
<http://www.actl.com//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>.

**The Real Estate Bar Association for Massachusetts:** The Mentoring Program of the Real Estate Bar Association for Massachusetts is available to lawyer-members who are new to the practice of real estate law for a period of six months. The program is intended to help such members develop professionally by providing access to an experienced real estate lawyer who can provide guidance and direction.  
<http://www.reba.net/page/membership>.

### **Additional Related Resources**

**Law Office Management Assistance Program** provides trainings for attorneys who are in the process of establishing solo practices. At these meetings, attendees learn about important considerations for the establishment of an independent law practice and ask questions about this transition.  
<http://www.masslomap.org/start-up-attorneys/>.

**Starting Out Solo** is an organization designed to help Massachusetts solo attorneys network and consult with one another about their law practice, both in terms of case work and management.  
<http://www.startingoutsolo.com/>.

**Pro Bono Opportunities:** Many pro bono referral programs will provide volunteers with training and/or an experienced mentor. One example is the Volunteer Lawyers Project of the Boston Bar Association (VLP). VLP offers an array of mentoring opportunities: 1) individual mentoring for new attorneys on assigned pro bono matters; 2) small group mentoring in family law cases to discuss issues that arise on pro bono matters; and 3) peer-to-peer mentoring groups.  
<http://www.vlpnet.org/>

*Please note that this document is an illustrative, but by no means comprehensive, list of the mentoring programs available for newly admitted lawyers in Massachusetts.  
Dated October 24, 2011*